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## AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES

The American Association of Law Libraries met in annual conference at Saratoga Springs, July 2 and 3, 1918. As was to be expected, the attendance was small, limited in the main to those members living in New York and near-by states. Two separate sessions were held, and one joint session with the National Association of State Libraries. Addresses were delivered as follows:

President's address: Edward H. Redstone, librarian, Social Law Library, Boston, Mass.; Workings of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention, Lawrence B. Evans, state librarian, Massachusetts; The effect of the world war on Anglo-American legal literature, Frederick C. Hicks, law librarian, Columbia University; A brief survey of special legislation, Frank E. Chipman, president, The Boston Book Company; Editing the New York session laws, John T. Fitzpatrick, law librarian, New York State Library.

These papers will all appear in future numbers of the *Law Library Journal*, hence no attempt will be made to review them here.

Committee reports of vital interest to members of the Association were delivered by the chairmen. Mr. Small as chairman of the Committee on Legal Bibliography brought us the welcome news that a check list of State Bar Association reports

is being prepared by an Iowa librarian, and that President Redstone has a bibliography of legal periodicals in the process of compilation. Changes in price and form of the Index were the chief topics touched upon in the report of the Committee on Index to Legal Periodicals and *Law Library Journal*. These points were discussed thoroughly by the members but the final decision was that the committee should be continued with power to act in extending the Index in any feasible way.

The third session was made interesting by a talk from Mrs. Margaret Klingelsmith of the University of Pennsylvania Law Library, on problems of law cataloging, and by an impromptu talk from Mr. Ferguson, the newly elected president of the National Association of State Libraries, on his work as state librarian of California.

The Nominating Committee made the following report of officers for the year 1918-1919: President: Edward H. Redstone, Social Law Library, Boston; first vice-president: John T. Fitzpatrick, New York State Library, Albany; second vice-president: Agnes Wright, Wyoming State Library, Cheyenne; secretary: Elizabeth B. Steere, Law Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; treasurer: Anna M. Ryan, Buffalo Law Library, Buffalo.

Executive Committee: George S. Godard, E. A. Feazel, John P. Dullard.

## LEAGUE OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONS

The first session of the League of Library Commissions was held on the afternoon of July 3, with Mrs. Elizabeth Claypool Earl, president, in the chair.

The meeting was made notable by the reappearance after twelve years of Dr. Melvil Dewey at an A. L. A. convention. The audience showed their esteem by rising to greet Dr. Dewey with hearty applause. Dr. Dewey spoke of the present war conditions with a spirit of optimism, showing the

great opportunity of the public library in a state of society in which democracy will come to its own. To him it seems that among the many things libraries can do, the greatest service is to aid the movement for simplified spelling. As a firm conviction, he repeated the assertion of the philologist Grimm, that the greatest obstacle in the way of English linguistic domination of the world, is the absurd and unscientific spelling of the English language. To

prove the rapid increase in the progress of English towards becoming the universal language of the world, he quoted statistics showing the relative increase in the last 400 years in the number of persons speaking the important modern languages. The whole tone of the address was optimistic and inspiring.

Following this address the members of the League, in a discussion lead by Mr. William R. Watson of New York, considered the progress made by the various states towards certification of librarians and standardization of libraries:

Only several of the states represented at the meeting reported any real action attempted, namely: California, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio and Texas. Minnesota and Wisconsin reported their state associations at work on proposed legislation, and Iowa reported an educational campaign under way. In California, the system of state examination relating to county libraries has worked almost perfectly. This system does not, however, include librarians of city libraries or county libraries, or library assistants. In Illinois an attempt at legislation was made in a section of a county library bill, but the whole bill was defeated, largely on account of the clause providing for certification. In Indiana, the experience of Illinois was anticipated in one legislature and in a second attempt a county bill without the certification clause was passed. The plan here was to certify all librarians of public libraries but not library assistants. In Massachusetts, the condition has been improved by legislation to hold examinations for the registration of librarians, but libraries are not compelled to employ registered librarians or assistants. Twenty-seven took the first examination. The New York plan is a merit rather than a certification system, and has met with rather wide approval, as previously set forth in *New York Libraries*. In Ohio there have been several attempts at legislation for certification but without legal results. In Texas the county law passed in 1917 provides for certification of county librarians.

The general sentiment of the meeting was that certification of librarians is one of the most important objects for which the library profession can work. Although representatives of many states felt that much educational work will be necessary before legislation can be obtained in their

states, no one expressed disapproval of some plan of certification.

On the evening of July 3, the League participated in a joint meeting with the Agricultural Libraries Section and the National Association of State Libraries on the subject of Food Conservation. [This session will be reported under the Agricultural Libraries Section.]

On the evening of July 4, the League met to discuss "Methods of control of state supported library activities," under the leadership of Miss Julia A. Robinson, of Iowa. Each state represented reported on the present relationship between the various state library activities and on any attempted or recently achieved consolidation:

In several of the midwestern states recent attempts or plans for consolidation were reported. The reason behind these attempts seems generally to be economy, although it was the expressed opinion of those present that no money saving would result in such consolidation. In several states, it appeared, the state library, more properly the law library or Supreme Court library is provided for in the constitution, so that unless the constitution should be changed, the only form of consolidation would be to bring all library activities under the state library. This was not considered desirable as long as the state library should be managed by the Supreme Court judges.

There seemed to be a general opinion that proper consolidation would be desirable to save duplication of effort. Coördination under one board of control rather than subordination of departments under one of the others was favored. North Dakota reported a gain in dignity and no loss in independence from being coördinated with other educational institutions under the State Board of Regents. Other states, notably Pennsylvania, have practical consolidation because the state librarian is ex officio secretary of the state library commission and connected with other library activities.

The value of such discussion, the president showed, was to evolve some ideal plan which could be used as a model by states establishing library systems, as a form for states reforming their present conditions, and as a goal towards which all states might be tending even though change does

not appear imminent or desirable. Miss Julia A. Robinson was then requested by the president to read the following plan for

### The Unification of State Library Activities

*Introduction*—Without attempting to elaborate the analogy between state and city in the provision of free books and reading, suffice it to say that since state supported library activities bear the same relation to the people of the state that a city tax supported library does to its residents, it would seem that the form of organization which has proved advantageous in the city might well guide in the formation of a central state agency. I would, therefore, beg to offer the following suggestions as a basis for the unification of state library activities, believing that in addition to being logical the plan will provide a good working organization for the promotion of library facilities in the state.

*I. Government*—The body authorized by law for the government of a city library in Iowa, and I think in most states, is an *appointed* board of trustees. The number of these differ as well as the terms in different states. As this has proved to be for the best interest of city library work, why then should state library work be placed under an *ex officio* board composed of members whose interests are in other matters to which their time and attention must be given, thus often condemning the work to small thought and insufficient support? In the state as in the city there should be a state board of public library trustees composed of interested persons appointed by the governor. Five, appointed for five years each, would seem to be an ideal arrangement, and the law should provide that at least two should be women.

*II. Name*—The analogy to a city library above mentioned would naturally suggest the name of *State Library* or *State Public Library* in such a unification.

*III. Division of work*—In no city library is the circulating department made subordinate to or placed under the direction and management of the reference department, which is what would be done if the library commission and the traveling library were placed under the state library. In any consolidation or reconstruction of state library activities there should be a reorganization as well which should create departments in the state work corresponding to

that in a city library: For example, (a) department of library extension, supervision and organization; (b) circulation department, to include the traveling library work; (c) state reference department, covering the work now done by the state library outside of the legislative reference work. The addition of a school or children's department for work in the schools might be desirable, though this would legitimately come under the department of supervision. Further details of the organization could be worked out as the needs required.

*IV. Special Libraries*—As is done in some cities, special law and historical libraries might be allowed to continue under separate boards, providing the law library be confined to law and legislative reference material only, and the historical library to source material and genealogy, though the latter might well be transferred to the state reference department.

*V. Appropriation*—The natural method would be to have a lump appropriation covering the whole, but the law should provide that the different departments should share in such a manner that no department should be built up at the expense of another.

*Conclusion*—It is much easier to secure an ideal organization in the beginning than by reconstruction and some difficulties might develop requiring a modification of the scheme. The above plan would probably not fit all states, but an adaptation could be made to meet local conditions.

At the close of the discussion, the members present in business session, took action on the amendment to the constitution proposed by Illinois. The constitution as amended at Berkeley fixed the annual meeting at the time and place of the mid-winter meeting of the A. L. A. Council. As a consequence, no mid-winter Council meeting being held, no legal annual meeting could be held this last year. By common consent the Saratoga meeting was voted the annual meeting. The Illinois amendment was then adopted as follows:

The annual meeting shall be held at such time and place as the Executive Board shall decide.

The treasurer having reported a balance of \$531.20, it was voted that the Executive Board be authorized to invest in War Savings Stamps any amount of this balance that they see fit.

The meeting was then adjourned.

At a meeting of the Executive Board held July 5, the secretary and treasurer, Mr. Henry N. Sanborn, resigned, and Mr. William J. Hamilton was appointed his successor.

HENRY N. SANBORN,  
Secretary.

## SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

(Reprinted from *Library Journal*, August, 1918)

The first session of the Special Libraries Association was held Thursday evening, July 4, in one of the parlors of the Grand Union Hotel at Saratoga. Owing to the resignation of Dr. C. C. Williamson, John A. Lapp, vice-president, presided on motion. He urged that special attention be given to increasing the membership and suggested the formation of groups within the association, as for commercial, legislative and medical libraries. He also outlined the desirability, in his view, of holding the annual meeting of the S. L. A. at a time and place other than that of the A. L. A. conference, and there was general discussion, both pro and con, of this latter suggestion.

A report was received from the war service committee, R. H. Johnston, of the Bureau of Railway Economics, chairman, reviewing its efforts to cooperate with the American Library Association in war work. It had been felt that members of the Special Libraries Association were especially well qualified to supply camp libraries with material or information in special or technical fields, and for this reason the War Service Committee, appointed by the president shortly after this country entered the war, had been endorsed at the Louisville meeting. The committee's report, however, showed that despite untiring efforts on the part of its chairman, the cooperation proposed had not been welcomed by the A. L. A., whose war committee felt that the needs of the camp libraries for technical material could be met by ordinary

public library methods. Realizing that to a large extent this was true, the committee confined itself to quiet cooperation with individual camp libraries which expressed a desire for special assistance; in a number of cases the resources of special libraries were drawn upon, and through their influence also several publishers of technical books and periodicals contributed their publications to camp libraries.

Notwithstanding the chairman's belief that "the opportunities for special service might have been placed with more effect by the A. L. A. before the camp libraries," he expressed his admiration for the war work accomplished by the A. L. A. and recommended the discontinuance of the committee.

Mr. Lapp raised the question of whether the time had not come for the Special Libraries Association to organize on the basis of function rather than geographical distribution. After a discussion of the desirability of dividing the membership into groups of libraries, according to their direct interests and the basis of such classification, on motion of Mr. H. H. B. Meyer, the executive committee was directed to make a survey of all special libraries, classify these by type and report the progress of the work at the next meeting.

Thirty-five were present at the second session, held Friday afternoon, July 5. Mr. Lapp, presiding, recalled the organizing of the association at Bretton Woods, nine years before, and spoke at length concerning the fundamental characteristics of the special library and the service it should render. His contention that the public li-